

# EAR CANDY

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## **Abby Parks**

*The Homeplace*

Give it up for Abby Parks, an artful writer and guitarist with a voice that could very well part the sea of kudzu leading out of Jacksonville, Ala. With her latest CD, *The Homeplace*, Abby doesn't hang her hat on just one peg but shows this is indeed *her* album musically, vocally and lyrically—quite the trifecta, and she scores on all points.

Abby's a storyteller, often throwing in a dash of melancholy, which puts *Homeplace* in company with one of my most oft-played CDs, All About Eve's *Scarlet and Other Stories*, but with a twist of American Gothic.

Standouts on *Homeplace* include the opening title track, an upbeat recount of exploring an abandoned house that's rumored to hide a treasure, and "Chantilly," an acoustic ballad that showcases her mesmerizing vocals and intricate guitar work — both of which she controls with affecting precision.

The rest of this album ebbs and flows with engaging, moody melodies, though she hits on some themes and metaphors that might raise an eyebrow, as in "Caves." Then again, two semesters of English Lit flew over my head, too, so apparently poetic aptitude isn't my strong suit. But nobody will mistake Miss Parks for being part of the uninspired brood of coffeehouse acoustic acts. Her blend of musicality gives that relaxing sense of something familiar, but she's original enough to make you wonder where the next song will take you.

— Phil Pyle